

LISSON GALLERY

Press Release

Bernard Piffaretti

Je n'ai jamais peint un tableau récent

April 12 – June 8 2024

1037 N Sycamore Ave, Los Angeles, CA

Opening: 12 April, 6 – 8pm

Lisson Gallery is delighted to announce a solo exhibition of paintings by French artist Bernard Piffaretti spanning a time period from 1987 to 2019. The presentation of 12 large-scale works marks the first time Piffaretti will showcase with the gallery in Los Angeles. For over four decades, the artist has deployed his distinctive method now known as “the Piffaretti system.”

In accordance with this process, each canvas is first of all bisected by a single vertical line. The artist then paints a spontaneous composition on one side of that dividing boundary, and then repeats it on the other. The deliberate ensuing ambiguity as to which side was painted first questions notions of originality, the authentic gesture, and completion.

Upon entering the gallery, visitors are met with Piffaretti’s abstractions in close dialogue with one another. The artist views his oeuvre as a constantly refined singular work, carefully curating exhibitions to feature compositions from various years, often with a decade or more between them.

In this instance, the exhibition is comprised of paintings made over a span of thirty years, and traces back to some of the earliest pieces made using Piffaretti’s signature motif. The oldest work on view, *Untitled* (1987), was created just one year after the artist began consistently basing his practice around “the central mark”.

In addition to the division of his canvases, there are other facets that can also be traced through Piffaretti’s practice. For example, *Untitled* (1990) features a sequence of crossed red lines forming a lattice structure and *Untitled* (2008) presents a series of multicolored bulbous shapes, both recurring elements within his larger body of work. These details are present in other paintings such as *Untitled* (2005) and *Untitled* (1994) respectively.

Piffaretti's commitment to looking back, whether immediately with his mirrored canvases or historically through references, is central to his method. In the same vein, the exhibition’s title, an adoption of a 1969 quote by Man Ray directly translating to “*I have never painted a recent painting,*” is a nod to Piffaretti’s belief that no work is ever truly new. To him, nothing is without precedent. As well as referencing his own previous pieces, the artist has cited influence from an array of painters, ranging from the likes of Marcel Duchamp and Henri Matisse to Barnett Newman and Andy Warhol. The works resulting from Piffaretti’s “system” act as a physical representation of the artist’s inclination to question the traditions and institution of painting.

About the artist

French artist Bernard Piffaretti bases his practice on repetition while analysing the components of painting. After art studies at the school of Fine Arts in Saint-Etienne from 1973 to 1979, he began to elaborate his “Piffaretti system”, fixed in 1986. This protocol is at the origin of every work he produces: each is composed of two panels apparently identical, separated by a vertical strip; one of the two parts is an attempt to duplicate the other, made beforehand. Once both panels are finished, the distinction between the copy and the original tends to fade. As the artist admits himself, “the repetition, act by act, on the second half of the canvas, can only produce an imperfect image”: Piffaretti's system aims at showing us

this impossible reproduction of the artistic gesture. In some works, the second part is even left irremediably blank, because of the complexity of the shapes painted. Piffaretti also realizes Drawings after paintings, reversing the concept of preparatory sketches and using them to seize his own work.

Bernard Piffaretti was born in Saint-Etienne in 1955. He currently lives and works in Paris. He has had solo exhibitions at Lisson Gallery, Shanghai, China (2021); Surplus Space, Wuhan, China (2021); galerie frank elbaz, Paris, France (2020); Lisson Gallery, New York, NY (2019); Kate Macgarry, London, UK (2017); KLEMM'S gallery, Berlin, Germany (2016); Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA (2015); Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris France (2014); Musée d'art moderne de Saint- Etienne, France (2009); Musée Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis, France (2008); and Cheim & Read, New York, NY (2002), among others. Major group exhibitions include Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2018); Gordon Robichaux, New York, NY (2018); Kunstverein Schwäbisch Hall, Schwäbisch Hall DE (2017); Musée des Beaux Arts de Nantes, France (2015); MAMCO, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Geneva, Switzerland (2007); and Centre d'Art Contemporain, Kerguéhennec, France (2005).

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across spaces in London, New York, Los Angeles, Shanghai and Beijing. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Ted Stamm and Roy Colmer. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Hugh Hayden, Van Hanos, Cheyney Thompson, Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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